

Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Pacific Region
<http://www.fws.gov/pacific>

News Release



For Release on September 2, 2010

Contact: Heather Emmons, BLM Nevada, (775) 861-6594
Jan Bedrosian, BLM California, (916)-978-4616
Jeff Clark, BLM Oregon, (503) 808-6028
Paul Steblein, Sheldon-Hart National Wildlife Refuge, (541) 947-3315

BLM, FWS Agreement Enhances Management of Wild and Feral Horses and Burros

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will further improve management of wild horses and burros on BLM-managed public lands in northwest Nevada, northeast California and south central Oregon and feral horses and burros on FWS-managed lands within the Sheldon-Hart Mountain National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Complex.

The wild horses and burros managed by the BLM are defined by the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971. Feral horses and burros, as defined by the FWS, are non-indigenous, unbranded, unclaimed descendants of domestic horses and burros that exist and move about unrestricted on refuge lands. FWS manages feral horse and burro populations to benefit a diverse assemblage of native plant and wildlife species, habitats and naturally functioning systems characteristic of the Great Basin ecosystem. The Sheldon NWR is currently reviewing management options as part of its Comprehensive Conservation Planning process.

Each agency is still responsible for management of horses and burros on lands they administer in accordance to respective policies and management plans. The MOU provides for improved coordination and cooperation, leading to enhanced management of horses and burros across the tri-state area.

Improved coordination between the BLM and FWS will result in achieving land use plan resource objectives and, where applicable, on the BLM-managed public lands, maintaining a thriving natural ecological balance for wild horses and burros and other natural resources. Utilizing the best available science, the agencies will work cooperatively together to conduct all management activities, including population inventories, gathers, habitat and population monitoring and outreach.

The agencies will establish an Executive Committee consisting of the BLM Nevada, California and Oregon State Directors and the FWS Pacific Regional Director/their designated representatives that will provide the leadership to implement management strategies outlined in the MOU. An Operational Working Group consisting of the BLM District/Field Office Managers and the Hart Mountain and Sheldon Refuge Managers/their designees will be responsible for implementing management priorities outlined by the Executive Committee.

A copy of the MOU is available on the web at <http://www.blm.gov/nv>.

